Ep 120: How to Build Company Values that Impact Culture

It's hard work, but will pay off if done correctly

o Identify the key value pillars that your company stands for today (or the perception of what they are).
  - o You have to start from a place of identifying what your company values most and expects of its people. These might look like honesty, integrity, accountability, but these may fall flat when articulated alone.
  - o The best way to start with this is to survey employees and/or hold a brainstorming session where folks identify what they believe the company's values to be as they exist today. What you are looking for in their answers are consistent themes that come up over and over again. You can choose whether or not you want those to be the values of the future of the organization, but you have to assess where you are starting from in order to put a stake in the ground with intention about where you want to go.
  - o Be mindful that you re not looking for this group to SOLVE the values question for you- you are looking for a temperature check on what already exists in the organization, or the perception your employees have on what the values are based on their experience.
  - o You get bonus points for engaging people in the process, so that when it comes time to rollout the values, they are bought in.
o Engage a team of culturally tuned in folks to assist in the value development.
  - o Once you have done your homework to assess where the organization feels the company's values lie today, you need to assess whether these are right, and what you want to move forward with.
  - o This is where you need to find the right people to help you with this. In every organization, these are people that others look to as it relates to culture. These are usually charismatic folks that draw others to them and are "fun" to be around. They are the likeable ones, but they also have influence over others.
  - o These are the people that are always organizing the happy hours, or ways to bring people together. They want to work with people they like and join organizations for the culture in addition to the job they are going to have. They really the troops when things may not be going great, they feel most comfortable when the teams are "getting" together.
  - o Note: these may or may not be people in leadership positions or positions of power. This is not a criteria for selection, but it may happen.
o Be choiceful about the value you select and the reasons why.
  - o The themes that come out today may or may not be the ones you want for the future. But you MUST put a stake in the ground and CHOOSE. There is also a limit. 4-6 is a good number to strive for. Any less and you may not have enough for people to grab onto. Anymore, and you make them too many and too hard to remember.
  - o We are big fans of success criteria which looks like this:
    - ➤ Are they ownable to us? (or can we make them that way.) Can we say this different from our competition?
    - ➤ Are they different enough from each other? (i.e. integrity and honesty are the same thing. You don't need both)
    - ➤ Are they things we will be proud to be a part of/work for? (i.e. if authenticity is expected, but not inspiring, then what is the next level of that? swagger? savvy? irreverence?)
    - ➤ When we look at the people that work here and that we want to KEEP, do they exude these values? (It may not be everyone and that is okay. In fact, this is a good way to take a look at your bench with objectivity and possibly weed out some bad eggs.)
    - ➤ Do they have enough "weight", meaning will they be able to last for years to come? (this goes back to the point about authenticity vs. the others options. They have to have impact.)
    - ➤ Are they tangible enough that people universally know what they mean and how to live them. Bonus points if they start using them in their vernacular.
o Craft the values in your company's voice.
  - o This is a big one, and one a lot of companies miss. They stop at the previous step and miss a MAJOR opportunity.
  - o Even if you go as far as to push something past authenticity to moxie or savvy or irreverence, this is not enough. Values have to be more than a single word. They have to speak to people so that they "get" them right off the bat.
    - ➤ Commitment = We eat impossible for breakfast. With a description of what exactly that means from a behavior standpoint.
    - ➤ Supportive = We got your six. We have the backs of every single person that works here.
    - ➤ Hardworking = We do good gooder. We are committed to the work but not so serious as to forsake our fun side.
  - o Here the structure again: More than a word. Not too long to not remember/attach to. Supportive phrase. BONUS POINTS: visualization. Iconography or illustration that brings the point to life for visual effect.
  - o Don't have a voice? We have an episode on developing brand character that you can check out. You can do the work in tandem, identifying the current values and the team to develop the finals while you suss our the brand character. (human characteristics- their how we speak as an organization.)

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